

REVIEWS

JOHN HAIMAN, *Talk is cheap: Sarcasm, alienation, and the evolution of language*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Pp. ix, 220. Hb \$40.00, pb \$18.95.

Reviewed by RUDOLF P. GAUDIO
Anthropology, University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0030
gaudio@u.arizona.edu

In this “idiosyncratic personal essay,” Haiman applies his formidable erudition and powers of social observation to questions that North American linguists in general are, unfortunately, content to ignore: the evolutionary origins and historical development of metalanguage, i.e. the property of language that allows us to say “that which is not,” including something other than what we “really” mean. The interdisciplinary nature of this project – engaging evolutionary biology, anthropology, and psychology, in addition to virtually all the traditional subfields of formal/theoretical linguistics – makes it an especially pioneering work, and represents a theoretical overture which, I hope, other linguists and social scientists of all stripes will follow up.

At first glance, Haiman’s major evolutionary argument seems to stand a basic premise of contemporary linguistics on its head. In contrast to structuralist and generativist linguists who assume that denotation – “straight” reference – is the basic function of language, he argues for the ontological priority of CONNOTATION. He describes a semiotic trajectory of routinization, decontextualization, and codification, whereby speech acts (as well as non-linguistic actions) become, through habitual use, increasingly “emancipated” from particular contexts of use:

Schematically: a symptomatic gesture or fidget (let us say a cry of pain like [aaaa]) accompanies a psychological state. That is, originally the gesture CO-OCCURS WITH the state. It becomes a signal which CONNOTES that state once it is recognized and responded to by some other animal. Finally, it becomes a sign (say the English word “ouch”) which DENOTES the state only once it is emancipated both from the stimulus which produced it originally and from the motivated state of which it served as a signal. (153, emphasis in original)

Although Haiman makes little reference to semiotic theories other than Saussure’s, the process he describes of (unmediated) gestures becoming (connotative) signals, which in turn become (denotational) signs, bears an unmistakable resemblance to Peirce’s triadic classification of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols. But Haiman departs from Peirce in two important ways. First, while Peirce’s trichotomy does invoke a phenomenological hierarchy from “firstness” (icons) to “thirdness” (symbols), he insisted that this schema was philosophical, not scien-

tific or evolutionary. A second, related point of divergence is that whereas Haiman sees denotation as “emancipated” from connotation, Peirce acknowledged the simultaneous co-operation of all three types of signification; he thus saw semiosis as a synchronic process involving various degrees of immediacy (iconicity), contiguity (indexicality), and arbitrariness (symbolism).

Haiman frames his theoretical account in modified Saussurean (i.e. binaristic) terms by positing a linear, gradual, and irreversible shift in semiotic meaning – the relationship of the signifier to the signified – from motivated to arbitrary. He thus performs the great service of making explicit the evolutionary implications not only of Saussure’s theory of the arbitrariness of the sign, but also of its Chomskyan descendant, the idea of the autonomy of language. Like Peirce and Saussure before him, Chomsky has refused to consider the evolutionary and sociological implications of his linguistic theories; and it is this very theoretical hesitance – or, according to some, this arrogance – that has isolated many formal/theoretical linguists from developments in other areas of the human sciences. While such isolation was understandable and arguably beneficial in the early years of the Chomskyan revolution, when most linguistics departments gained their institutional independence, it is now a needless and dysfunctional archaism. Thus *Talk is cheap*, in concert with other linguistic works on language and evolution (including Bickerton 1990, Armstrong et al. 1995), provides an important intervention; it should encourage other linguists with biological and historical interests to come out of the synchronic, autonomous closet, and to develop intellectual links with like-minded colleagues in other disciplines.

In asserting the importance of this book as a potential instigator of future interdisciplinary collaborations, I am purposefully treating as disingenuous (and even “cheap”) not just Haiman’s title, but also his Peircean claim that, “although I believe that much of what I have just said here is possibly true, I am not so naive or pompous as to mistake this book for any variety of hard science, soft science, or social science” (191). To be sure, *Talk is cheap* is eclectic and “idiosyncratic” in its orchestration of scientific theories and findings; but this essayistic quality hardly makes it unscientific. On the contrary, Haiman’s evolutionary claims constitute a scientific theory par excellence: a theoretical account purporting to explain a wide array of empirical observations (his own and others’) about metalanguage, linguistic history, and human evolution. The major difference, as I see it, between Haiman’s theory and those proposed in more conventional scientific venues is the degree to which he seems to ENJOY academic argument for its own sake, and his concomitant willingness to make claims that he can reasonably expect others to dispute.

In that spirit, I am happy to take up Haiman’s implicit invitation to dialog by offering the following criticisms and suggestions for further research. First, it is unfortunate that Haiman has limited himself to a linear, unidirectional model of linguistic evolution, since this unnecessarily constrains his ability to account for a number of the phenomena he describes. His choice seems partly to be an artifact

of his commitment (however weak) to a Saussurean semiotic framework; but it seems also to reflect an uncertainty regarding the concept of EVOLUTION itself. In much of the book, particularly when he cites ethological and sociobiological literature, Haiman seems to be using the term in its biological sense. In other parts, however, the biological meaning is eclipsed as Haiman discusses far more recent historical phenomena, such as the spread of the “cult of plain speaking” in the 19th and 20th century US, or diachronic shifts in the meaning and use of oblique and reflexive pronouns from Old English to Modern English. It is unclear how or whether Haiman sees these historical developments as examples of linguistic “evolution.” In any case, the notion that diachronic change (biological or linguistic) is necessarily linear and unidirectional is problematic: It is either tautological – if change is assumed to be a function of conventionally measured time – or else it is arguable (as I believe), in which case it deserves to be investigated problematically rather than merely stipulated.

If Haiman had recognized and explored the Peircean qualities of his own, largely implicit semiotic theory, he might have found it easier to clarify his intentions regarding the evolution and social history of metalanguage. Peirce’s notion of the INTERPRETANT, defined as the process of signification whereby a REPRESENTAMEN (signifier) is linked to an OBJECT (signified), is especially helpful in this regard, since it problematizes the nature of the relationship between signifier and signified in a way that Saussure’s theory does not. In particular, Saussure sees signs as either motivated (and therefore not really signs at all), or as arbitrary, while Haiman sees signs as more or less “emancipated”; but Peirce’s framework allows for more complex considerations of the role of context, culture, history, and ideology in processes of signification (see Hanks 1996, ch. 3, for a linguistic-anthropological elaboration of Peirce’s semiotic theory). Haiman’s accounts of historical language change, and of the pragmatics of contemporary English and other languages, are most obviously amenable to such an analysis; but the concept of the interpretant could also be used to problematize some of the sociobiological claims that Haiman seems to accept without criticism. His discussion of “dysfunction” (186–89) is particularly questionable; it seems to assume, erroneously, that there is a consensus among evolutionary biologists regarding what is or is not “functional” or adaptive, and how this can be determined (see Fausto-Sterling 1992 for a detailed account of contemporary ideological debates in human biology).

This is not to say that Haiman’s analogies between biological and linguistic evolution are necessarily off base. Thus his emphasis on repetition and habituation as fundamental processes, both in biological evolution and in the growth of socio-cultural institutions, finds particular resonance in contemporary research pertaining to the effects of learned behaviors on the development of biological structures – as well as in practice-oriented social theorists’ discussions about the construction and reproduction of cultural hegemony. But it is important to note that – as Peirce recognized, with regard to the semiotic relationship between signifier and

signified – the repetition and habituation of human behaviors does not generate codification and institutionalization in a social and ideological vacuum.

Despite these criticisms, I would emphasize that Haiman’s focus on the evolution and sociohistorical elaboration of metalanguage makes an important contribution to contemporary Euro-American social theory – much of which, as the blurb on the back cover of the book indicates, is enthralled by irony, sarcasm, and other forms of “unplain speaking.” The blurb goes on to state that “Haiman traces this sea-change in our language usage to the emergence of a postmodern ‘divided self’ who is hyper-conscious that what he or she is saying has been said before.” Indeed, Haiman, like his publisher, is clearly interested in appealing to readers conversant with the latest developments in critical theory; however, much of his argument seems to CHALLENGE rather than support the notion of a distinctly “postmodern” condition. By showing how the use of any human language is predicated on speakers’ (evolutionarily based) consciousness of themselves AS LANGUAGE USERS, Haiman provides a much-needed corrective to presentist arguments about the uniqueness of contemporary Western modes of thought and action. Talk has always been cheap.

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STEPHEN HESTER & PETER EGLIN (eds.), *Culture in action: Studies in membership categorization analysis*. Washington, DC: International Institute for Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis and University Press of America, 1997. Pp. viii, 193. Hb.

Reviewed by ANDREW L. ROTH
 121 Player Court, No. 4
 Walnut Creek, CA 94598
 and ELIZABETH A. BOYD
 Communication, Rutgers University
 New Brunswick, NJ 08901

In the mid-1960s, the late sociologist Harvey Sacks initially developed the concept of “membership categorization devices” as a means of analyzing how people identify, describe, and refer to one another. In his now canonical treatment of a child’s story, “The baby cried. The mommy picked it up,” Sacks (1972) explored the possibilities for formal analyses of references to and descriptions of persons, as implemented in written texts and talk-in-interaction.

The present edited volume rejoins this enterprise, offering a variety of theoretical and empirical essays on membership categorization by currently practicing ethnomethodologists from England, Australia, Canada, and the US. The theory-oriented essays in this volume, especially the editors' introductory and concluding chapters, aim to establish the viability of "Membership Categorization Analysis" (MCA) as an autonomous mode of inquiry, which draws on but is distinct from the fields of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis (CA) – and, more generally, sociology. The volume's empirically oriented essays address the operation of membership categorization across several settings (e.g. Australian secondary schools, the 1987 Iran-Contra hearings, and a British television commercial), and they seek to show the distinctive findings that MCA might generate.

More or less explicitly, a major theme of the volume's theory-oriented chapters is Harvey Sacks's status as an ethnomethodologist, rather than a conversation analyst; indeed, the volume represents an effort to "reclaim" Sacks as an ethnomethodologist. Insiders may appreciate what is at stake here; but for those unfamiliar with the divisions between ethnomethodology and CA, this effort may make sense only in light of recent controversies. For example, David Bogen and Michael Lynch (who contribute a chapter to the present volume) have criticized Sacks for spurning the ethnomethodological impetus of his early work in favor of a "positivistic" approach, focused on formal methods rather than the phenomena under inquiry (cf. Lynch & Bogen 1994). Sacks did, in fact, come to de-emphasize membership categorization in his work; this change of focus was motivated at least in part by his own misgivings regarding the extent to which analyses of membership categorization relied on and thus reproduced vernacular, rather than sociological, accounts of social action. Instead, Sacks turned his attention to the organization of talk-in-interaction, including but not limited to its sequential organization.

In their introductory chapter, the editors also discuss the trajectory of Sacks's work. In doing so, they situate Sacks's decision not to pursue the investigation of membership categorization devices per se as a choice integral to the (re)establishment of MCA as a viable, autonomous research enterprise. To bring Sacks back into the fold of ethnomethodology, H&E first subject his work on membership categorization to fairly extensive critique. By their account (14–17), Sacks made three errors in his exposition of membership categorization. His efforts at a formal analysis of membership categorization failed because (a) he focused on the "machinery" that generates descriptions; (b) he treated categories "out of context," "entertaining the possibility of their having alternate meanings"; and (iii) he developed a misleading distinction between "natural" and "topic-occasioned" collections. All these errors generated a "decontextualized" account of membership categorization. Although H&E make a compelling case for point (c), their exposition of their first two criticisms may leave those who are familiar with Sacks's work wondering whether it has been adequately represented here. Nonetheless, H&E argue that correcting these three shortcomings in Sacks's conception of membership categorization promises to revive the enterprise that Sacks prematurely left behind.

What does this reformed version of MCA look like? H&E offer this programmatic statement: “The ethnomethodological vision of membership categorization analysis is one which regards categories and devices as indexical expressions, emphasizes the local, contextual specificity and use of categorizations, and sees categorial order as a local accomplishment of the use of categories-in-context” (25). The hyphenated term “categories-in-context” serves, H&E offer, to underscore the “reflexively constitutive relations between category and context” (28). The point is an important one; and its relevance for analyses of categorization is illustrated in H&E’s considerations of conversations between teachers and educational psychologists about children who might be referred to counseling services, and of newspaper headlines reporting suicides. But the exercise of ILLUSTRATING that categories and contexts are mutually elaborative is different from, and perhaps only preliminary to, the task of DEMONSTRATING how an understanding of this point generates new research findings. At the present stage in the development of ethnomethodology and CA, analytic payoff is to be gotten by showing the consequences of the reflexive relationship between categories and contexts. Unfortunately, the contributions in this volume stop short of making this next, crucial, analytic step; consequently, the reader is left to wonder whether there have been new developments in MCA since Lee’s cogent treatment of a newspaper headline (1984), not to mention Sacks’s essay on the differences between vernacular and professional forms of description (1963).

Rod Watson’s contribution to this volume, on the relationship of categorization to sequential organization, addresses some of these issues. He argues that, in practice, CA scholars and ethnomethodologists have tended to treat sequential organization and categorization “as a dualism . . . setting the two poles of the dualism in competition with each other” (53). Moreover, he contends that CA scholars’ recourse to the notion of “recipient design” (e.g. Sacks et al. 1974) – as a means of addressing “the categorial order of conversation,” while maintaining the primacy of its sequential organization – must necessarily come up short, as “token acknowledgment” of the role that categorization plays in talk-in-interaction (58).

Echoing H&E’s conception of “categories-in-context,” Watson calls for new studies that treat the “‘structural’ (sequential) and categorial aspects of utterances as reflexively tied, as mutually constitutive” (54). Despite the ecumenical tenor of his proposal, his argument appears to rely on, and indeed perpetuate, the very dualisms between ethnomethodology and CA that he purportedly seeks to resolve. For example, Watson writes that analyses of categorization in talk promise to “highlight the MORAL ORGANIZATION OF TALK in a way that reference solely to sequential features structurally conceived neither necessarily nor consistently does” (68, emphasis added). This claim is convincing only if one dismisses the host of CA studies, beginning with Sacks’ own work, which treat the sequential organization of talk as a normative organization, as well as dismissing the inextricable relationship of utterances’ lexical COMPOSITION (including but not limited to the implementation of categorization devices) and their sequential POSITION.

This is perhaps where *Culture in action* disappoints most thoroughly. If there are significant differences between CA and MCA, perhaps the most consequential one lies in the formulation of the primary object of inquiry: Is it categorization per se (to which this volume is addressed), or rather the social organization of talk-in-interaction, which surely includes but is not limited to categorial organization? In the interest of promoting their argument that CA has rejected MCA in favor of (misguided) structural analysis, the contributors to this volume repeatedly ignore the growing body of recent CA work that takes up the very issues of person description, person reference, and recipient design (cf. Goodwin 1990, Schegloff 1996, Roth 1998); indeed, the contributors seem to rely on an understanding of CA that does not extend past 1984. The resulting neglect of recent developments in CA not only facilitates the perpetuation of potentially misleading distinctions between (versions of) ethnomethodology and CA; in the end it also does a disservice to MCA (or at least to its potential as a viable, autonomous enterprise), by denying it a source of rich and varied empirical findings generated from a CA perspective.

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RODOLFO JACOBSON (ed.), *Codeswitching worldwide*. (Trends in linguistics: Studies and monographs, 106.) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998. Pp. vi, 267. Hb DM 218.00.

Reviewed by MICHAEL CLYNE
Linguistics, Monash University
Clayton 3168, VIC, Australia
michael.clyne@arts.monash.edu.au

The past decade has seen a healthy increase in the number of studies in the areas constituting language contact research. Prominent among these have been investigations into grammatical aspects of “code-switching,” often covering pairs of

languages not previously investigated. Many of the chapters in the book under review are based on papers read at a conference in Bielefeld, Germany, in 1994. While this gives the papers coherence, it means that some of the points made have already been left behind in later publications by the same and other authors.

The 11 chapters in the volume fall into four main sections: “General issues and new frontiers,” “Language norms and models and how to describe them,” “Patterns and styles of codeswitching,” and “The historical perspective: Genetics and language shift.” They are informed by the authors’ studies in a range of language contact pairs and situations. Other recent books (Auer 1998, De Groot & Kroll 1997) cover the conversation-analytic and psycholinguistic areas of the field.

Hendrik Boeschoten opens the volume with a critique of “code-switching” as a cover term, in view of the ambiguities and inherent problems involved with its use, the importance of other language contact phenomena (those designated as “code-copying” by Johanson), and especially the frequent neglect of language change in these studies. Boeschoten sets the stage for some of the debates to follow (terminology and frameworks, universals, history). In a discussion of norms, he refers to his own Dutch–Turkish data to argue that norms will develop in “networks of limited scale” (21), and he asserts that the rigid concept of linguistic norms makes the problem of the synchronic fallacy unassailable. It may be that ongoing adjustments to the Matrix Language Frame Model (Myers-Scotton 1998), along with the consideration of historical issues, might go some distance to address Boeschoten’s objections.

Abdelali Bentahila & Eirlys Davies see most mixed discourse in terms similar to those of Myers-Scotton, as an “unequal partnership” between two languages. However, their article is devoted mainly to examples of code-switching between Moroccan Arabic and French, where both languages provide the system morphemes and therefore the matrix language; a prevalent example is the combination of Arabic demonstrative and French definite article. Some of the examples in this article may have influenced the development of Myers-Scotton’s new three-morpheme model (1999). In any case, the authors’ remark on arguing about the matrix language when you don’t have access to the discourse of the example (36) makes sense. The data show a fine balance between the two languages in the mixed discourse, with alternation, insertions, and “leaks” – when relatively insignificant items from the dominant language infiltrate the other. The authors argue that discourse dominance, proficiency, priority, usage patterns, and symbolic value all contribute to the type of discourse described.

Jacobson himself argues against universal constraints, on the basis of Mexican-American and Malaysian data, reintroducing a relationship between identity and the way in which the resources of the languages are used. Delia Haust & Norbert Dittmar, employing a slightly modified Matrix Language Frame Model, describe data from Mandinka–Wolof–English trilinguals who produce polyphonic utterances for social functions because of their creative potential and communicative competence in the three languages.

Carol Myers-Scotton reiterates her well-known Matrix Language Frame Model, particularly emphasizing the Complement Phrase (CP), rather than the clause or the sentence, as the unit within which code-switching is described (Inter-CP vs. Intra-CP). Much of her essay is devoted to a discussion of two ways of identifying the matrix language (building on Myers-Scotton 1993a,b): structurally based (relying on morpheme order and system morphemes, and generally involving relatively more morphemes), and socially based (relying on unmarked choice – “the language that we are speaking” being based on a set of social conditions). In this chapter we can see how the model has been refined as the notion of system morpheme and the criteria for the ML have changed considerably. The question of converging systems does not yet rate a mention, but the idea of the Composite Matrix Language (Jake & Myers-Scotton 1999) makes the MLF more consistent with some sets of data.

Shoji Azuma directs his attention to the bilingual’s speech processing. Drawing on Willem Levelt’s “Speaking” model, he explores why certain constituents, e.g. among Japanese–English bilinguals, are switched as chunks. He also discusses “stand-alone” switches, e.g. conjunctions, and contributes to the ongoing debate on more and less switchable word classes. Some of the same issues emerge in Erica McClure’s study; she uses “borrowing”/“code-switching” from English into Bulgarian and into Spanish, in magazines, as points of references. The degree of contact with an English-speaking country, and the consequent functions of English in the country examined, both influence the extent of “borrowing”/“code-switching” (which cannot be readily differentiated, even in a study of written language like this one).

Li Wei draws on his research in two groups of British-born Chinese in the Tyne-side area of England: the Cantonese Punti involved in the food trade (the majority), and those whose families originated on Ap Chau, near Hong Kong, with pre-migration network ties, who belong to a particular evangelical church. Using an innovative combination of a conversation analysis-style sequential approach with a networks approach, he is able to demonstrate that history of language contact and social organization of the group (mainly business vs. kin) is responsible for communicative norms, language choice, and code-switching patterns.

Jeanine Treffers-Daller takes up the differentiation by Grosjean (e.g. 1995) between the monolingual and bilingual modes of bilingual speakers. She is motivated by “the new challenge . . . to formulate constraints that account for universal and variable aspects of code-switching behavior at the same time” (178). In the process, she assesses the value of the notions of “base language,” “deactivation,” and Muysken’s “insertion”/“alternation” dichotomy (1995) in the light of her Turkish–German data – which clearly differentiate Turkish, German, and bilingual modes, each with a base language as well as different types and frequencies of code-switching.

Rajeshwari Pandharipande, in considering the relation between genetic connection and code-switching, also questions the universal validity of constraints.

Her comparison of Marathi–English and Marathi–Sanskrit switching emphasizes the role of sociolinguistic function, including perceived proximity, in code-switching/borrowing; this is demonstrable in variation, as it occurs in integration processes.

Rosita Rindler Schjerve, following Myers-Scotton's MLF Model to describe a sizable corpus of Sardinian–Italian code-switching, tests whether the matrix language and switching (turn-specific and intra-turn) are an indicator of language shift in Sardinia; she comes to a negative conclusion. Such factors as age, gender, education, network, and competence in the languages are cross-tabulated with switching types. Bidirectional switching reflects more open networks; it is common among the middle-aged, who are the most active switchers. Those with more closed networks (especially the older generation) switch more into Sardinian. Women switch more into Italian, but also switch back into Sardinian more than men, and then remain in that language. Young people tend to have Italian as the matrix language, largely reducing Sardinian to formulaic responses and interjections. Despite large-scale lexical convergence, the grammatical system of Sardinian seems resistant to similar convergence.

All in all, this is a stimulating and representative collection of articles; it advances the discussion of universal constraints, matrix language, bilingual mode, the “borrowing”/“code-switching” continuum, networks and code-switching, and other important issues in the field. It is only a pity that, with the rapid developments in language contact studies, some of the writers could not take the most recent literature into account.

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MARTIN PÜTZ (ed.), *Language choices: Conditions, constraints, and consequences*. (Impact: Studies in language and society, 1.) Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1997. Pp. ix, 427. Hb \$127.00.

Reviewed by THOMAS RICENTO
Bicultural-Bilingual Studies, University of Texas
San Antonio, TX 78249
tricento@lonestar.utsa.edu

This is a collection of 21 essays from the 20th International L.A.U.D. (Linguistic Agency University of Duisburg) Symposium, held from Feb. 28 to March 3, 1995, at the University of Duisburg, Germany. In the words of the editor of the collection, the authors “explore the relations between social, psychological and (socio)linguistic aspects of language contact and language conflict situations both from a theoretical and an applied linguistics perspective” (x). The volume is divided into four sections: “Sociolinguistic and linguistic issues,” “Language policy and language planning,” “Language use and attitudes towards language(s),” and “Code-switching: One speaker, two languages.” Rather than discuss all 21 articles, I will focus on several whose themes are relevant to a number of areas of sociolinguistics.

Two articles in the first section deal with fundamental issues: the relation between language contact and conflict, and the meaning of “mother tongue.” Peter Mühlhäusler, “Language ecology: Contact without conflict,” tentatively concludes, based on his analysis of the situation in New Guinea, that “social conflict and language contact are independent parameters” (6). This is based in part on the observation that, in the New Guinea Highlands – an area with large languages and relatively little linguistic diversity – there is more violent intergroup conflict than in the coastal areas characterized by greater linguistic variety, extensive trade, and cultural contacts. Why there is more conflict in the Highlands, as opposed to other regions, is not explained by M, which leaves us to wonder about the possible independent contributions of population density and stability, cultural practices (e.g. development and use of weapons), and relative ability to mediate land disputes – in short, the kinds of variables that historically, and in varied contexts, lead to conflict between groups, whether or not they speak the same language. In a similar vein, Fishman 1989 found that peaceful coexistence, on the one hand, and civil strife, on the other, are unrelated to the degree of linguistic heterogeneity in a country. If M and Fishman are both correct, then why should the maintenance or promotion of linguistic diversity, a-priori, be the goal of language planning? The answer, according to M, is that traditional societies in Melanesia and Australia, over time, developed patterns of stable bi- or multilingualism which enabled a large number of groups, many of them small, to coexist peacefully without being culturally and linguistically absorbed. Speech communities adapted, according to M, by developing several types of phenomena: special sub-languages such as “mother-in-law” languages, pidgins for trade and other contact situations, esotericity (formally and lexically complex language-

es), and grammatical convergence and lexical divergence. All of these enabled members of a multilingual community to function as a single communication network. M argues that disruption of the linguistic ecology of traditional societies in Melanesia and Australia has given way to more languages in a plural or plurilingual context – a recipe for future conflict, and an opportunity for one of the more powerful “killer languages,” such as English, to take over. Though this description may be accurate, it is not clear how an ecological approach to language planning, as described by M, could recalibrate the cultural and linguistic perturbations that Western culture has introduced into (or forced upon) that society. At any rate, much of the intergroup warfare that pre-dated European contact has diminished, and the lifestyles of many New Guineans have changed, for better or worse.

Creating new socio-economic linkages to replace those that existed for thousands of years prior to Western contact is a tall order, and M has few specific suggestions as to how it might be accomplished. Local language planning, as opposed to state-level planning, is the approach that M favors, and his arguments here are convincing. However, if a language ecology approach to language planning is to succeed, it needs to be more convincingly argued, and to a broader audience than professional linguists. Why should those outside these communities care? Will the lives of those directly affected by such planning improve? Why? I concur with Robert Phillipson & Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, who argue in their contribution in section 2 of this volume: “We need to make our agendas clearer and to refine our persuasive skills in formulating counter-hegemonic beliefs and influencing a much wider audience than the academic community” (144).

Somewhat in contrast to Mühlhäusler, Florian Coulmas, “A matter of choice,” argues that a mother tongue is not necessarily, or only, a birthright, and that individuals can (and do) freely choose the language to which they will attach great personal importance, even adopting it as their mother tongue. C cites literary figures from Eurasia and Africa (e.g. Celan, Conrad, Nabokov, Beckett, Ionesco, Achebe, Narayan, and Rushdie) who adopted second languages or wrote in two languages. This is an exceptional group by virtue of their talent as WRITERS of language; but the point is made effectively that the language one adopts can be chosen – whether for reasons of political opportunism, economic gain, social opposition, or esthetic sensibility. However, the circumstances and consequences associated with such choices need specification. C argues that the suppression of the German language (and ancestry) in the US during the World Wars, and the re-assertion of German as a mother tongue in Kazakhstan in recent years, are both examples of language choice in which political and economic considerations played a decisive role; but he fails to distinguish the degree of negative coercion (with German in the US) vs. positive identification – or wishful thinking – in the case of Kazakhstan. As Wiley 1998 demonstrates, the “choice” made by German-Americans to renounce their ancestry occurred during the most repressive era in US history (the Americanization campaign, 1914–25), with consequences for the status of non-English languages and cultures that are felt to this day.

On the other side of the “choice” coin is the idea of mother tongue as a kind of genetic blueprint, a marker of a “people” that privileges its speakers to some sort of cultural or spiritual exclusivity/superiority. C traces the development of this idea in German literature, beginning with the work of Humboldt in the 1820s, especially his *On the national character of the languages*; this reached its disastrous apogee during the National Socialist movement, but continued into the 1950s in the work of Leo Weisgerber. Concerned about this “ugly” side of “mother tonguism,” C appropriately separates language and thought, and argues that languages such as German are social constructs, based on their speakers’ willingness to acknowledge such an identity: they are not based on an essence (37). As an example, C claims that German is not German, but Bavarian. Plattdeutsch etc., i.e. dialects. According to C, the standard German language (called the “Protestant dialect” by Jacob Grimm) has still not become the mother tongue of the majority of the population (37). Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between these two poles: mother tongue as accident of birth, subject to acceptance or rejection, vs. mother tongue as cultural destiny. As Gabriele Sommer puts it in her article “Towards an ethnography of language shift: Goals and methods”: “We are not yet in a position to develop a sound theory that explains why some groups opt for language maintenance while others give up one of their languages” (58).

The articles on language policy and language planning demonstrate the theoretical, methodological, and practical challenges of planning languages in diverse contexts. Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, “Lessons for Europe from language policy in Australia,” demonstrate that, while the Australian National Policy on Languages of 1987 has theoretical (if unrealized) promise, language planners in Europe face even greater challenges, both theoretical and practical. Issues identified by P&SK include definition and designation of basic terms such as “European,” “European identity,” and “European languages”; reconciling the principle of linguistic equality between all official and working languages in the EU with a de-facto pecking order of languages; the logistic problems of providing translation services for the nine working languages of the current 15 EU member states; and the push and pull of “free market forces” against formal attempts to organize European multilingualism. Possible remedies are explored, e.g. better and earlier second and foreign language education, and use of an artificial language such as Esperanto; but, as the authors conclude, it is likely that those who have productive/receptive competence in at least one of the “big” languages (English, French, German) will have greater economic opportunities to participate in the EU than those who do not.

The challenges of indigenizing national languages to take on the “high” functions that had been assumed by ex-colonial languages are explored by H. M. Batibo, “Double allegiance between nationalism and Western modernization in language choice: The case of Botswana and Tanzania.” It turns out, according to Batibo, that only three countries in sub-Saharan Africa have gone very far in the indigenization process: Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Other countries have

been less successful because of their multilingual nature (e.g. Zambia, Ghana, or Nigeria); because their governments have not made serious attempts to deal with the issue (most former French colonies); because the countries have only recently attained their independence (e.g. Namibia); or because the ex-colonial language has remained the main official language (e.g. Botswana, Swaziland, Kenya, Lesotho). However, Batibo warns that, with the recent abandonment of socialism in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Somalia, elitist interests may once again favor strengthening ex-colonial languages as important tools for modernization (or, perhaps, as an excuse to maintain social control), especially in Botswana and Tanzania.

Articles in Section III deal with methods of assessing language proficiency and attitudes in contact situations. Eugene H. Casad, "Language assessment tools: Uses and limitations," discusses data-gathering techniques that have been developed over the past 30 years at the Summer Institute of Linguistics to map out the distribution of languages and dialects in geographical and social space, and to evaluate their status relative to one another. The discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of interview techniques, questionnaires, and various oral and written proficiency measures is excellent.

Sonia Weil and Hansjakob Schneider report on the results of a research project conducted by the Research Center for Multilingualism at the University of Berne (UFM) on language attitudes along the French–German language border in Switzerland. Five hypotheses were tested using a matched-guise experiment and questionnaire. Using results from Bernese informants, the authors found that language attitudes of French speakers (7.8% of the Bernese population) toward German speakers (83.8% of the Bernese population) were more negative than attitudes of German speakers toward French speakers. Although the ratings of each group toward the other improve slightly on the border between the German- and French-speaking sectors (Berne and Valais), evidence is provided that the so-called territorial solution to language contact situations is less than ideal, if attitudes are taken fully into account.

Three papers comprise Section IV on code-switching. Carol Pfaff, "Contacts and conflicts: Perspectives from code-switching research," summarizes the extant literature on code-switching, pointing out the theoretical and methodological divides; she argues for a synthesis of the linguistic and social analysis that has been done in order to develop and verify hypotheses about the relationships between linguistic, cognitive, and social processes that obtain in language contact situations. The clear presentation of the issues and relevant studies makes a difficult topic accessible to non-specialists.

The other two articles in this section focus on particular code-switching phenomena. Pieter Muysken, "Code-switching processes: Alternation, insertion, congruent lexicalization," argues that three separate patterns of code-switching occur within sentences, and he uses data from bilingual corpora and detailed structural analyses of individual examples to make his case. Rosalie Finlayson & Sarah Slabbert, "'I'll meet you halfway with language': Code-switching within a South

African urban context,” examine an important social function of code-switching, namely accommodation, within a South African township, Soweto. Specialists in the field will find that the data analysis and tentative conclusions in these two articles are useful and thought-provoking.

Overall, this volume is impressive in scope of topics and domains of inquiry. It deals with most of the important sociolinguistic phenomena and contentious issues associated with language contact and conflict. However, one problem area is the number of errors found in the text. There are many typos, probable misspellings, hyphens in words where none belong, repeated lines of text, and missing words. One type of error has specific implications for the very topic of this volume, namely usage in a second or foreign language. There are a number of strange coinages (at least for this speaker of North American English), such as “pro capita” for ‘per capita’ (183) and “life quality” for “quality of life” (200). Also in evidence are errors in tense, e.g. “a pilot project also starts providing Dutch language lessons” instead of “has started providing” (190), or “and transfers Brussels gradually. . .” (191). Morphological errors abound, as in “the installment of durable institutions” (191), “this kind of statements” (188). Although these are relatively minor variations and errors, they do raise the issue of standards and editorial responsibility in collections whose authors are writing in their second (or third, or fourth) language.

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GERRY KNOWLES, *A cultural history of the English language*. London: Arnold, 1997. Pp. x, 180. Hb \$59.95, pb \$20.00.

Reviewed by RICHARD W. BAILEY
English, University of Michigan
 Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003
 rwbailey@umich.edu

In his preface, Knowles makes clear what his book is not. It is not a history of literary English, and it is not an account of changes in linguistic form; it is a “cultural history.” In the introductory chapter, he declares: “In view of the close connection between language and power, it is impossible to treat the history of the language without reference to politics” (9). Of course, books that purport to be histories of English have often “treated” the subject without apparent politics.

Knowles is right in alleging that the politics of such books has often been implicit, since most of them provide information about the ascent of one variety of the language to the elevated status of a standard – as if that were an inevitable and desirable result of the spirit of goodness working itself out through speech.

This book, however, is a history more of culture than of language, and therefore probably not a wise choice for undergraduate students of the subject, at least outside Britain. American students will lack knowledge of the finer details of English topography, e.g. “the Tamar” (29), a river some 60 miles long in south-western England; of minor players in English history, e.g. “Levellers and Diggers” (93); and of the convention that Shakespeare can be invoked as “the Immortal Bard” (77) without other identification. Certain criticisms may also baffle them, e.g. “a bit dozy” (47), “conurbations” (120–21, 144–45), and “jumper chisels” (17). In the section labeled “English in the American Colonies” (133–34), they will be surprised by the claim that present-day English in these ex-colonies “has had little dialect variation, geographical or social.” In his preface, Knowles writes of reconsiderations of linguistic history that are facilitated by “analysis of historical corpora” (ix); but there is only one hint that his book involves any such resources (see 102n.), and that is a tiny detail about spelling which came to his attention only after the book had been written. A teacher using this “outline history” would be pleased to find any hint of controversies whatever their source, but Knowles declares baldly that *she* comes from the Old English feminine definite article (43n.), even though this is no longer the favored view among many possibilities (see Crystal 1995:43). He alleges that *It’s me* is a “Danish borrowing” (43) of the Middle English era; but since there is apparently no written evidence of the usage until the 16th century (Gilman 1989:567), it might have been wise to offer this as a conjecture rather than a fact. The 18th century “prescriptive grammarians,” he writes (111), “looked back on the work of [Joseph] Addison as a model of excellence”; in fact, Addison ranks fourth in the list of authors whose bad English is reprobated by those pedants (Sundby et al. 1991:35). Knowles devotes ten lines of print to the Great Vowel Shift; but since there is no phonetic key (or a discussion of the issues involved), a teacher would find this a bare outline indeed. Having whisked those changes by the reader, Knowles adds the following sentence, which is unlikely to rouse further interest in the matter: “Even with a knowledge of phonetics and phonology it is difficult to keep track of these changes” (84).

In a concluding section of the book, Knowles invites sympathy for his struggle in “forcing the information into a linear order, and patching up with cross-references when this proves impossible” (161). The book would have been “easier to write, and more logically organized” if it had been presented “in hypertext format.” That remains to be seen.

I regret this rather dismissive review, but the advertising copy on the cover (perhaps not written by Knowles) states that the book is “designed to complement a corpus-based study of formal changes.” Such a book would be highly

welcome, now that all of Old English, the Helsinki Corpus, and the Middle English Compendium (to name only three possibilities for historical studies) are accessible on line. Unfortunately, Knowles provides no description of these immensely valuable sources, and no hint about how the matters treated in his book might be illuminated by them. His final section, devoted to the future of English, continues a long tradition of anxiety about the malign forces that are about to subvert English. This time it's not the "illiterate Court-Fops, half-witted Poets, and University-Boys" that so worried Jonathan Swift (quoted on p. 117); it's some rough beast slouching toward London. "We can predict," writes Knowles conspiratorially, "that some organization will assume the power to control the English language" (162), while mentioning the "tiger economies." For once in British commentary, it's not the Americans. It's heading in the direction of London from "the east." Beware Tandoori Take-Away!

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MARTHA KOMTER, *Dilemmas in the courtroom: A study of trials of violent crime in the Netherlands*. (Everyday communication: Case studies of behavior in context.) Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1998. Pp. xxix, 186. Hb \$49.95, pb \$27.50.

Reviewed by GREG MATOESIAN
Criminal Justice, University of Illinois
 Chicago, IL 60607-7140
 u46988@uicvm.uic.edu

Among the most relevant, practical issues in the courtroom – and explicitly recognized by attorneys well in advance of their occurrence – are the potential dilemmas involved in the questioning of witnesses. Practicing attorneys (and often their trial consultants) spend much time considering strategies for managing these. If we do X, this will happen; if we do Y, that will happen. Komter's book is a fine-grained and multiplex analysis of the interactional dilemmas that confront courtroom participants in cases of violent crime in the Netherlands. Using a conversation-analytic/ethnomethodological framework, she examines the communicative dilemmas that arise in a system with both adversarial and inquisitorial elements, and she shows how these dilemmas are shaped by the institutional interests of the participants. In a much broader sense, her study continues a strong empirical program initiated by Atkinson & Drew 1979 on the attribution and

negotiation of blame in accusation sequences; but other readers may find Komter's work strikingly reminiscent of Pomerantz's classic analysis (1978) of the interactional dilemmas that shape compliment responses.

The book is divided into an introduction and four empirical chapters. The introduction offers a succinct definition of interactional dilemmas – simultaneous conflicting value systems – and situates the book within the relevant literature. Komter's data consist of observations of 48 trials and transcriptions of 31 trials on audiotape in cases of violent theft, murder, attempted murder, aggravated assault, and rape. For the ethnographically minded, nearly all the defendants were male, and most were from 18 to 23 years of age.

Each remaining chapter focuses on the conditions that generate particular types of interactional dilemmas, and the interactional strategies for managing these: dilemmas of interest vs. credibility, conflict vs. cooperation, blame vs. sympathy, and morality vs. coercion. Thus, in the inquisitorial system, judges must be seen as objective and impartial in their questioning of defendants. Moreover, they depend on suspects for a good deal of information about the case. Yet, in eliciting such information, judges necessarily invoke issues about moral identity as they allocate blame and responsibility for the crime. How can they elicit agreement to facts of the case without generating defensiveness on the part of the defendant? Defendants, by contrast, must cooperate with the judge in the fact-finding process, yet simultaneously orient to the blame implicatures of the judge's inquiry of the facts. Consequently, judges and defendants are simultaneously oriented to dilemmas of cooperation and conflict. According to Komter, judges manage their dilemma by modulating the accusatory force of their questions, in order to elicit a cooperative response from a suspect concerning a factual piece of information (what Philips 1998 refers to as "nailing down an answer"). In a case in which the defendant is charged with attempted manslaughter (attempting to run the victim over with his car), the judge refers to this as follows: "If I understand correctly then yes then you wanted to frighten her." Suspects manage their dilemma – being cooperative while simultaneously being alert to the blame implicatures of the judge's inquiry – by providing qualified or partial admissions of blame. My favorite example of this is what Komter refers to as "denial of agency," in which the suspect mitigates his involvement in the action to manage both ends of the dilemmatic pair (a powerful discursive strategy which operates by projecting a lack of agency): "Then I suddenly remembered my gun and I reached for it and then there were shots." Here we see how the defendant mitigates responsibility through what Komter refers to as the passivity marker *suddenly*, and through alternation of active and passive constructions – an indication of the delicacy and rich depth of her analysis. (Linguists might be especially interested in such examples as a way of indicating the problems of using grammatical features to directly index aspects of context, such as gender. As Ochs 1992 notes, there are few features of language that directly and exclusively index gender and other structural variables).

Komter's analysis is also relevant to those interested in the study of ideology and other value systems, especially where researchers ground their explanations in essentialistic, unidirectional, and reductionist idea systems. Thus research in the fields of criminology, law, and criminal justice often relies on concepts, such as the ubiquitous and ambiguous notion of "courtroom work group," which tend to invoke a single (and cooperative) orientation on the part of legal participants (such as moving cases as efficiently as possible through the system). In stark contrast, Komter situates the legal order within a dense maze of contradictory value orientations, and she demonstrates how participants weave a delicate path around these to accomplish their distinct institutional interests.

I have two general concerns about the book. First, while it is certainly tempting to explain the interaction between judge and defendant by invoking some a-priori notion of power or asymmetrical relationship, Komter refrains from doing so; instead, she invokes the judge's ceremonial concern for being seen as objective, neutral, and legitimate (and this tempers the use of judicial power). Even so, there are some instances in the data (see p. 82) where it appears that the judge possesses a good deal of discursive power relative to the defendant. Specifically, it appears that the judge is able to generate double-bind contrastive forms and other accusatory discourse practices, while the defendant's opportunity to manipulate extended sequential structures in this way appears much more constrained. Consider the following: "Judge: 'Did Van Lommel have influence over you?' Defendant: 'I think so. (Yes).' Judge: 'Even though you'd known him for only one day?'" Further, one cannot help wondering how some of the techniques for managing dilemmas (e.g. denial of agency) are tied to broader cultural formations, such as the therapeutic culture, and how these specific techniques may draw on and reproduce these macro-forms.

One of my favorite pieces of social theory is the classic study of "sociological ambivalence" by Merton & Barber 1982, on the conflicting values in the role of professor as a prototypic example (teaching vs. doing research). But Merton focused only on the structural sources of such contradictions, not on their interactional genesis or management. *Dilemmas in the courtroom* represents the interactional complement to this by specifying in powerful detail how dilemmas are interactionally generated and managed in the performance of legal knowledge. *Dilemmas* is a theoretically sophisticated and richly detailed book that will be of immense interest not only to those concerned with discursive practice, especially in the field of language and law, but also to researchers in the areas of criminal courts and criminology.

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LAWRENCE B. BREITBORDE, *Speaking and social identity: English in the lives of urban Africans*. (Studies in anthropological linguistics, 11.) Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998. Pp. xii, 227. Hb DM 198.00.

Reviewed by JAN BERNSTEN
English, University of Michigan
Flint, MI 48502-2186
bernsten@umich.edu

In the introduction to this book, the reader follows Wilson Nyanforth, a 35-year-old Kru civil servant, through his morning in New Krutown, Monrovia, Liberia. As Nyanforth travels to work, he uses Kru and English separately and in combination, his language choices varying with the setting and the participants in the encounter. His greeting to his boss is an example: “Good morning Honorable Tarpeh, *na klɔba* (my chief)!” Breitborde’s monograph on language choices of Kru-speaking inhabitants of New Krutown has many such specific case studies of language in use: these illustrate his claims and make the book accessible to readers. But his goal is to do more than provide descriptive case studies. He writes: “I ask how the choices urban Kru persons make to speak English embody certain aspects of contemporary social relations and cultural values, not simply within the community of speakers but also linking them to the Liberian national polity. In this sense, then, I attempt to integrate both the (societal) macrolevel and the (individual) microlevel in the exploration of the social meaning of English” (4).

The interplay between societal forces on the one hand, and individual language choices on the other, is a recurring theme of this book. Breitborde explores the theme with methodology which seeks to integrate social anthropology and anthropological linguistics. One strength of the book is the multiple sources of data from which the analysis is drawn. Breitborde looked into the history of language use in Liberia; conducted household surveys, language attitude surveys, and formal interviews; and did a long-term participant/observer study in 1975–76. He lived in New Krutown, attended church services and court sessions, visited, shopped, and participated in formal and informal social events. He returned to Monrovia for additional data collection in 1984, 1988, and 1992.

Liberia is unique in West Africa in having a group of native speakers of English, the Americo-Liberians, who held power in the capital from 1822 to 1980. However, the Kru at the center of this monograph had even earlier contact with

speakers of English, in the 18th century, because of their employment in shipping. In fact, the term “Kru” may have come from the English word *crew*. The original group of peoples to whom this term was applied live along Liberia’s southeastern coast. The Kru who live in Monrovia are the only indigenous ethnic group who had an official government corporation, offering the opportunity for self-government within New Krutown.

In Chaps. 2–3, Breitborde provides an ethnography of New Krutown, centering on the linguistic diversity and sociolinguistic patterns in the area. He found a significant amount of bilingualism there, with speakers frequently code-switching between Kru and English. Chaps. 4–6 focus on the social information conveyed by the use of English, on the social settings most likely to invoke the use of English, and on the link between English and a person’s social identity. Like others working in Africa (e.g. Myers-Scotton 1993), Breitborde found English to be associated with education, youth, modernity, and – most of all – being “civilized” (*kwi* in Kru); by contrast, Kru was connected with age, tradition and ethnicity. These chapters are illustrated with extensive case studies of language choices in specific speech events, such as “queen” contests used to raise money for worthy causes, political meetings, and encounters on city buses.

In Chap. 7, Breitborde contrasts choices to use Kru or English within church services; he shows that, despite situational expectations about language choices, individuals are still free to choose from their language repertoire based on their aspirations and preferences. He concludes that “history and their historical consciousness have allowed urban Kru to appropriate English (not just Kru) as a marker of their urban ethnic identity, yielding a rich and complex set of meanings and value to the English language in their lives” (18).

A serious problem with this monograph is one that Breitborde readily admits in his introduction: The bulk of the data is more than twenty years old. Many things have happened in Liberia in the past twenty years to change the sociolinguistic setting, and thus the current validity of Breitborde’s claims. He collected most of the data in 1975–76, before the 1980 coup in which previously excluded ethnic groups replaced the Americo-Liberians in power. The long-running civil war which began in 1989 had an even greater impact on the social fabric of Monrovia. The disruption of education during the civil war has certainly affected the teaching and learning of English. Breitborde notes that the Kru Corporation, so crucial in maintaining tribal solidarity, has collapsed. These factors make his work most relevant as a historical treatment.

The age of the material is also reflected in the bibliography, which influences the theoretical orientation. Of more than 240 references, only 36 were published after 1985; of these, only 12 are dated in the 1990s. For example, Breitborde bases his discussion of code-switching on Gumperz’s 1982 distinction between situational and conversational code-switching. But there are a number of more recent viewpoints, such as those articulated by the diverse group of authors in the volume edited by Milroy & Muysken 1995. Breitborde mentions some of these

newer orientations in the notes of the text (e.g. Heller 1988, Jacobson 1990, Myers-Scotton 1993), but he does little in the text itself to apply the newer approaches to his data analysis.

Because of the presence of the Americo-Liberians – and because of the existence of West African Pidgin English, which developed separately in the 17th and 18th centuries – a number of varieties of English are spoken in Monrovia. These include Standard Liberian English, Vernacular Liberian English (developed from the US Black English of the mid-19th century), Non-Native Vernacular Liberian English (influenced by local vernaculars), Liberian Pidgin English, and Kru Pidgin English (Hancock 1974). Breitborde includes Hancock's description in his text, but his use of the label "English" in contrast with "Kru" somewhat masks the complexity of the continuum of English usage actually found in Monrovia.

These limitations aside, this monograph offers a comprehensive ethnography of the Kru living in New Krutown, along with a detailed discussion of their language choices and the roles of English and Kru in their lives. The variety of data collection methods provides many different sources of evidence to support Breitborde's claims. His writing style is lively, bringing an enthusiasm and vigor to the work which make it a pleasure to read.

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ALASTAIR PENNYCOOK, *English and the discourses of colonialism*. London & New York: Routledge, 1998. Pp. xii, 239. Pb £14.99.

Reviewed by RON SCOLLON
Linguistics, Georgetown University
Washington, DC 20057
scollonr@gusun.georgetown.edu

This is a very contemporary book. By anchoring his discussion on English Language Teaching (ELT) in Hong Kong at the widely watched pivotal point of transition from British to Chinese sovereignty, Pennycook is able to range backward to ELT in India, and to construct a narrative of the adherence between the discourse of colonialism and the discourse(s) of ELT. Worldwide, ELT is a major

industry. It collects practitioners who range in background from specialists in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, with Ph.D.s and research grants, to those who have few or no credentials beyond having been born into an English-speaking community and enjoying world travel. This book should find a significant and large audience among these teachers; but somehow one wonders if it will.

Very carefully positioning the field of ELT within the more than century-long history of British colonialism, Pennycook's main argument is that the discourse(s) of ELT and English language propagation have adhered to the discourse of colonialism for this entire period. He sets out to show in considerable detail that little in these discourses has changed in the 150 years since the British began teaching English in India and the Malacca Straits. The book is interesting in detail and challenging in argument. My reservations about its readership arise from a feeling that, for those who have an interest in colonialism, the narrowed focus upon Hong Kong and India misses significant points of contrast with other linguistic colonialism – Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch – which in many cases preceded British/English colonialism. However, for those who are daily practitioners of ELT around the world, Pennycook's carefully crafted and hedged postmodernist argument will so strongly signal his residence in an ideological camp that readers can be spared the difficulty of dialectical engagement in the argument.

The overall plan of the book begins in Chap. 1, with an overview of topics, including the role of English and ELT in producing colonialism as a cultural product. Here Pennycook is careful to argue that he is focusing on cultural, as opposed to political or economic, colonialism; he argues that the cultural variety is a distinct form of colonialism, remaining in force well past the time when political and economic forms have dissipated. Chap. 2 is a selective review of the literature on colonialism. Chap. 3 moves into an interesting and engaging analysis of the dialectic between Anglicism – the argument that the people of the colonies would be best served by learning English – and Orientalism, the argument that the study and teaching of the native languages of the colonies best serves the interests of both the colonies and the empire. Like Said 1979 before him, Pennycook implicates the discipline of linguistics in the production of colonialism.

In Chap. 4, Pennycook challenges the notion that Hong Kong has always been a stable, passive community, based on free commerce; he does this with a chronicle of the opium trade, which was the basis for many of the corporations now at the heart of Hong Kong's financial community, as well as of the many riots and other disturbances which occurred throughout the century and a half of British rule of Hong Kong. This is a very important corrective of the historical mythology constructed around the change of sovereignty. Chap. 5 will tell readers of this journal nothing new, but it is still engaging in its detailing of the many absurd claims made for the inherent superiority of the English language. Of course, these mostly (but not always) popular claims are part and parcel of the positioning of English as a world language, and so are often a serious embarrassment to sociolinguists interested in the position of English around the world.

Chap. 6 turns to European characterizations of the Chinese, then and now – arguing that little has changed: from the earliest depictions of the Chinese as lazy, on the one hand, and money-grubbers on the other, down to recent depictions of Chinese students of English in Hong Kong as memorizers who care only about marks and job success. Pennycook’s whole argument is summarized in the final Chap. 7, which makes a few somewhat gratuitous points about English in Australia. These give a perhaps unfortunate reminder, just at the end, that the book has not taken the broad scope of World English into account, but really refers just to India and Hong Kong.

The central theme of the book is that “certain discourses about English adhere to English” (p. 8). Specifically, Pennycook argues that “English language teaching was a crucial part of the colonial enterprise and . . . English has been a major language in which colonialism has been written” (9). It may seem nit-picking to point out the definite article in “the colonial enterprise”; but to my mind, Pennycook relies excessively on British colonialism as the archetype of all colonialism. Throughout the book, British colonialism is referred to as “the” colonial enterprise; this is unfortunate in that Pennycook seems to show no awareness that the same issues were dealt with long before the British reached India. The lifetime study by Hanke (1959, 1974) of the 1550 debate in Valladolid, Spain, between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, on the true nature of the American Indians, described what may well have been the point where the deepest outlines of the colonial project were first drawn. Were the non-Europeans to be thought of as “natural slaves,” as Aristotle argued (Sepúlveda’s position)? or were they to be understood as humans (the argument of las Casas), and so to be brought into the faith (i.e. both the Christian religion and European cultural sphere) through the use of their own languages? This debate, of course, did not take place in India or Hong Kong – nor was it carried out in English, or in reference to English language teaching. But in the three centuries that passed between Valladolid and the British debates about India in the mid-19th century, this controversy had been renewed by successive colonial powers, and had circulated throughout Europe. From this perspective, one sees that the British Empire was not, in fact, originating a position, but rather appropriating the structure of its own position from its former antagonists around the world.

It is hard not to think that the book would have profited by comparison with other languages – Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch – and the colonial discourses about them. Indeed, for the adherence argument to stand, we would need to see that these other linguistic/cultural/language-teaching colonialisms also had adherences to language attitude colonial policy, paralleling those of ELT/English and British colonialism. Alternatively, Pennycook might be arguing that somehow the English language and British (but now American) colonialism were more successful than, say, Spanish, so that we could learn to dismantle English/ELT colonialism by studying its differences from the others. Still, the book is

strangely British/Anglocentric, considering that its explicit agenda is to position ELT and colonialism critically and historically.

Pennycook's volume is well designed, though one wonders how its seven illustrations were chosen. Only two are directly germane to the text. The first is Robert Kaplan's famous "squiggles" drawing, which I was sorry to see repeated, since Kaplan himself has frequently written and spoken against his own earlier and oversimplified production of the "Asian" writer as circular in logic. The second illustration positions the author, Pennycook, as the descendant of grandparents who were "managers of tea and rubber plantations in colonial India" (202). This helps the reader to see the source of Pennycook's concern with colonial India, and it makes good on his early promise to position himself within the complexities of the ELT/British colonial discourses.

This is a complex book, containing areas that will appeal to a variety of readers. While it raises as many questions as it answers, perhaps this is to be embraced as the nature of our current understanding of the discourses of colonialism and ELT.

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JANE KAMENSKY, *Governing the tongue: The politics of speech in early New England*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. ix, 291. Hb \$35.00.

Reviewed by E. JENNIFER MONAGHAN
 English Dept., Brooklyn College of The City University of New York
 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210-2889
 ejmbc@cunyvm.cuny.edu

In what she terms "an exercise in historical eavesdropping" (10), Kamensky explores the relationship between speech and society in 17th-century New England. In doing so, she places speech at center stage in the New England experience. Her insightful study floodlights the connections between gender and speech, speech and power, community cohesiveness and community deviance. Early New Englanders, she argues, believed "speech was conduct and conduct was speech" (5); that is, in a culture that remained largely oral, they imbued speech with powers almost as great as those of actual deeds.

The bulk of Kamensky's sources are indeed the product of eavesdropping: oral utterances recalled (usually because of their deviant nature) by witnesses in judicial procedures, and transcribed by the recording clerk. Despite this triple filtering of the evidence – by the rememberers themselves, the clerk, and the uneven sieve of time – voices from three centuries ago come through loud and clear. The haunted air rings with the words of ungoverned speakers unleashing their tongues in the home, in the village, or in public venues such as the courts. John Porter calls his mother a “pisse house” and a “Shite house” and, faithful to his scatological metaphor, invokes a “turd” upon the court officers (106, 107). Eunice Cole, when asked by her neighbor why she has come so close to his cows, shouts back at him, “What is that to you, sawsbox?” (157). A Quaker blasts the magistrates as “proud, problematical, base, beggarly” (121).

Insults aside, Kamensky convincingly demonstrates that speech, like so much else in early America, was highly gendered. What was appropriate for one gender was inappropriate for the other. The prescriptive literature brought by immigrants to the shore of Massachusetts Bay (or left behind in the mother country) made this abundantly clear. It was woman's special responsibility to govern her tongue, because it was her sex that was predisposed by nature – or so opined every male author who cared to discuss the subject – to scold. Moreover, she was preprogrammed to scold in ways that threatened the peace, harmony, and order not only of the family, but also of the community at large. “Than a good tongue, there is nothing better; than an evil, nothing worse” (18), as it was put by a Puritan minister (by definition a professional wordsmith).

Although silence was enjoined upon the young of both genders, the reticence of elite boys was only temporary – a waystation on an educational path that would lead them through formal rhetorical training in the classics, up to public speaking in council or pulpit. But for young women, forbidden by Saint Paul to dispute on matters of divinity, silence would remain a permanent condition. In the summation of Richard Brathwait, author of *The English Gentleman* (1630), what was written of girls should be “properly applied . . . to all women: *They should be seene, and not heard*” (25).

Paradoxically, the Puritan immigrants – who had spoken out so openly in England against authority – sought hard, once they were on American soil, to re-establish this (male) authority within the context of a denomination that actually afforded unusual equality to women in matters of the spirit. The short-term result was an expansion of the space in which women could legitimately speak. But this immediately generated a tension between women's speaking more freely and, at the same time, being required to exercise increased self-restraint.

It is against this background that the impropriety of Anne Hutchinson's speech, her boldness with her tongue, is now set. The tale of the so-called Antinomian controversy has often been told. Hutchinson arrived in New England with her husband in the fall of 1634, and a few weeks later she was admitted into Boston's first church; two years after that, she was already well known in the community

for the prayer meetings held in her house, which initially attracted only women. Her exegeses of the Scriptures, along with her claim that there was no need for any intermediaries (namely ministers) to interpret the word of God, naturally enraged the ministers of Boston. The conventional explanation for Hutchinson's trial and subsequent banishment by the Massachusetts Bay court in the spring of 1638 is that she was convicted of improper prophesying. Her worst offense, however, as Kamensky argues, was to challenge the male ministers on their own terms, matching logic with logic in the trial setting. It was her behaving more like "a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer" (72) that proved the greatest challenge to Puritan authority.

This familiar controversy plays only a small role in Kamensky's tale. Among other topics, she discusses the excommunication of Anne Hibbens by the Boston church, a few years later. Hibbens's fall from grace began when she quarreled with the carpenters she had hired to work on her house because they refused to do the work for the agreed price. Many were the scandalous things she said about them, but at the heart of the crisis was her behaving more like a husband than her own husband did.

Untangling the implications of gender for acceptable speech are but one part of Kamensky's discussion. She goes on to examine filial speech in the mid-1660s, when John Porter's outrageous insults against his parents drew the ire of the courts. In a social and religious hierarchy that viewed the relationship of God to man as that of a father to his children, rebellious children were a clear threat to the godly community. Next comes an overview of the role of public apology, as Kamensky explores the elaborate healing ritual by which a person could publicly retract his or her words – which, ironically, included restating the very words that had caused such offense in the first place.

Words that could not be retracted, namely the speech of so-called witches, form the topic of Kamensky's final chapter. Her interpretation here is that, by their witch-hunting, New Englanders were also attempting to control just how far language could go. Witches, by definition, erased the boundary between words and deeds: their "spells" were words made fact, incantations that had dire consequences in the real world. In an epilog, Kamensky returns to this theme in its contemporary dress, asking again whether words, unlike sticks and stones, "can never harm you." For all our devotion to free speech, she concludes, our revulsion against "hate speech" aligns us with the Puritans of old: like them, we may still judge that words can indeed cause havoc and even death.

Kamensky has documented her argument carefully – her notes form nearly a third of the book – and she displays an easy familiarity with secondary sources in both the anthropological and historical literature. While her approach to her material is very much "history by quotation," she uses a quantitative approach when she can. She has identified 1,209 instances in which, between 1630 and 1692, cases relating to speech were brought before either the Essex County Court, the Court of Assistants, or the General Court of Massachusetts. Of these, 244 in-

volved what she terms “speech against authority” (as opposed to civil cases such as slander, or criminal cases other than anti-authority speech, such as blasphemy, perjury, or scolding). Her graphs reveal that the number of cases in Massachusetts involving speech against authority rose until 1660 and then underwent a steady decline. The governing New England male elite was apparently becoming more tolerant of ungoverned tongues – at least until the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692. (Sharp-tongued Anne Hibbens was one of its victims; she was transformed from scold to witch, and her tongue was finally silenced by the gallows.)

Any reviewer of Kamensky’s study would be remiss not to comment on Kamensky’s own speech. To say that her discussion is stylistically innovative is not enough. She is skilled at the rhetorical tropes so beloved by the many Puritan ministers who appear in her study. She employs antitheses and parallelisms, colloquialisms and double entendres, genuine questions and rhetorical ones. Her writing is rich in metaphor. Above all, she deftly and almost seamlessly stitches fragments from the speech of the past into her own prose. A brief excerpt, selected almost at random, may hint at its flavor. Hutchinson is being compared to Eve: “Like a serpent ‘sliding in the darke,’ Hutchinson used ‘cunning art’ – in the form of her ‘bewitching’ tongue – to ‘insinuate’ her opinions into the Puritan Eden. Thus instead of being the pious mother of a godly family, she became ‘the breeder and nourisher’ of the errors identified by the Cambridge synod” (77).

This innovative, well-argued, and exceptionally well written treatment of a neglected topic deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone who cares about the relationships among speech and gender, power and politics, language and society.

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ALBERT VALDMAN (ed.), *French and creole in Louisiana*. (Topics in language and linguistics.) New York & London: Plenum, 1997. Pp. xiii, 372.

Reviewed by FELICE ANNE COLES
Modern Languages, University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
fcoles@olemiss.edu

The purpose of this volume is not only to provide “more delicate and accurate descriptions” (p. 2) of Louisiana French, but also to highlight the variation, origins, and social contexts of French-related varieties in Louisiana. The volume’s editor, whose research on French and creole linguistics spans decades (cf. Valdman 1977, 1978, 1983, 1993) has gathered – starting from workshops and annual meetings on regional dialects – an impressive collection of articles on Western Hemisphere French, in order to create a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and future of French in Louisiana. The reader may consider dividing the book into four sections: (a) general issues surrounding endangered languages and minority languages in the US; (b) linguistic sketches of Cajun French (CF) and Louisiana Creole (LC); (c) discussions of sociopolitical events surrounding the

language planning and preservation movements; and (d) chapters devoted to other varieties of French that have similarities to CF and LC.

Valdman's introductory remarks present questions on the status of French in Louisiana. For example, does language define identity (p. 2)? What are the norms of CF and LC (10)? What origins and influences can be detected on these varieties (13)? And how are language attitudes related to attempts at ethnolinguistic preservation (14)? This introduction serves as the thematic basis for further discussions in the chapters on language obsolescence, language contact and creolization, first-language attrition, and the status of linguistic minorities. Although all the chapters focus on French, they contain some useful ideas and insights for scholars in the general areas of language death and revitalization.

The initial chapter by Carl Blyth, "The sociolinguistic situation of Cajun French: The effects of language shift and language loss," applies general knowledge of language shift (with references to seminal works such as Dorian 1981, Fishman 1964, and Mougeon & Beniak 1991) to the present situation of CF. Happily, this chapter also lists some CF scholars currently working in the field, from whom future investigations may be expected (cf. Picone 1997, Rottet 1997). The following chapter by Sylvie Dubois, "Field method in four Cajun communities in Louisiana," looks at the issues surrounding surveys of minority speakers, with a detailed description of the interview process for eliciting language attitudes. These two chapters form a fine theoretical and methodological basis for subsequent sections.

Chaps. 4–6 (and Chaps. 12–13 should really be read with these) provide detailed information on the phonology, morphology, and syntax of CF and LC. Thus A. Valdman & Thomas Klingler, "The structure of Louisiana Creole," and Margaret Marshall, "The origin and development of Louisiana Creole French," explore the antecedents in, and influences of, vernacular French and African languages on the varieties in Louisiana; while T. Klingler, Michael Picone & A. Valdman, "The lexicon of Louisiana French," and Pierre Rézeau, "Towards a lexicography of French in Louisiana: Historical and geographic aspects," investigate the lexical and morphological creativity needed for language maintenance over more than 200 years. These chapters contain a wealth of information, specifically for those perusing dictionaries and vocabularies of CF and LC.

Chap. 7, "The Louisiana French movement: Actors and actions," by Jacques Henry, and Chap. 8, "The development of a Louisiana French norm," by Becky Brown, discuss the sociopolitical history of ethnolinguistic activism of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), including its establishment by James Domengeaux, support by the public education system and by foreign governments, and the controversies of creating orthographic conventions. Chap. 14, "Research on Louisiana French folklore and folklife," is an interesting sequel here, since the author, Barry Ancelet, also describes the history and social struggles of preserving French folkways in Louisiana. These three chapters together present a coherent perspective on the notion of prestige and ethnic pride in a minority language community.

The next group of chapters is intended to provide descriptions of other varieties of French in order to compare the linguistic situations that share “many sociolinguistic and linguistic features with that of Louisiana” (237). Chap. 9, “French and creole on St. Barth and St. Thomas,” by Julianne Maher, notes that St. Barth Creole and LC have similar geographical and social origins, but different demographic and economic environments. Chap. 10, “Structural aspects and current sociolinguistic situation of Acadian French,” by Karin Flikeid, shows the continuation of original Acadian French linguistic features in the formation of Louisiana French; and chap. 11, “Sociolinguistic heterogeneity: The Franco-Ontarians,” by Raymond Mougeon, gives a survey of Acadian French sociological variables for “panlectal comparative sociolinguistic research” (287). The intent here is admirable, but the focus is removed somewhat from Louisiana, and these chapters might have been better placed in another volume. Nevertheless, each author includes a section showing how these “other” varieties of French can be relevant to the study of Louisiana French, with both specific suggestions (comparing verbal restructuring) and general implications (the sociolinguistic demographics of Francophone communities).

Controversies surrounding CF and LC are explored separately in various chapters, but are never the main focus of these mainly descriptive works. For example, M. Marshall (Chap. 13) enters the debate on the origins of LC by hypothesizing, on the basis of 19th-century documents, that LC emerged “considerably evolved . . . and much more uniform than LC became in the 20th century” (342). By viewing linguistic evidence in orthography, as well as social evidence from government records, Marshall concludes that LC variation was “encouraged” rather than “stabilized.” A related issue is the influence of African languages on LC: Valdman & Klingler (Chap. 5) note that Zydeco, an “Africanized version of Cajun folk music” (111), is a point of cultural pride for African-Louisianans. But direct and singular African influence is hard to attribute in the grammar of LC, although the lexicon (159) provides some identifiable loanwords (e.g. *gri-gri* ‘a charm’). The difficulty of labeling varieties of French, a longtime concern of Becky Brown (1993), is not discussed in detail, but is brought up with the research on language attitudes and stigmatization.

The greatest contribution of this volume lies in bringing together so many important authors in one valuable reference work. The sheer detail of the descriptions (especially in the lexicon), the range of research on sociological and sociolinguistic issues, and the references to both classic and current investigations all make this book an invaluable resource for anyone interested in French in the Western Hemisphere.

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RACHMIEL PELTZ, *From immigrant to ethnic culture: American Yiddish in South Philadelphia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. Pp. xix, 263. Hb \$49.50, pb \$18.95.

Reviewed by MIRIAM ISAACS
*Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, University of Maryland
 College Park, MD 20742
 misaacs@wam.umd.edu*

South Philadelphia can be added to the littered landscape of Jewish geography, in which Chelm, Belz, Odessa, Boiberik, and Brownsville are terrain abandoned by Jews. They are romanticized in folk songs, but they make poor real estate investments. Similarly, Yiddish cultural life may be seen as a landscape of outmoded lifeways. The Yiddish language and its dialects have been cast off, but at the same time they remain cherished in memory. Peltz's ethnography explores Yiddish as it survives among what is left of a Yiddish-speaking community in Philadelphia. The story of Yiddish is one of powerlessness; Peltz takes us to the seemingly marginal Jews, the *yidelekh* – working-class, elderly women and men who are marginalized as a function of their old age, their accents, and their lack of higher education.

Peltz's ethnography does not center on rejection but on cultural transmission. What makes this ethnography unusual is that he has chosen as his subjects the elderly Jews of a humble, run-down neighborhood. Peltz thereby fills a gap in the study of American Yiddish culture, which has hitherto been dominated by Irving Howe's *World of our fathers* (1978), a book with an overwhelmingly male, New York intellectual bias. Although recently the lens has broadened to include immigrant women's lives (Weinberg 1988), there is still considerable room for a fuller view. While most studies have been retrospective, Peltz offers a contemporary view of Yiddish life, as well as a view of the past obtained by probing backward through memory.

Through highly detailed and thoughtful analysis, Peltz enters the world of his subjects through their relationships to the Yiddish language, as well as their connection to religion and to the non-Jews among whom they live. The sociolinguistic context is important. Yiddish came to America with Jewish immigrants who were forced from Russia and Poland between 1880 and the early 1920s. For them Hebrew was a language limited to religious use, but Yiddish was the common language for immigrants from diverse linguistic backgrounds: Latvian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, and Polish. Yiddish was a common link – a symbol of national pride, with schools, newspapers, and a literature of note.

In South Philadelphia, the tide of assimilation and urban flight long ago removed most Jews from a once vibrant immigrant center. The Jewish population dropped from about 100,000 in 1920 to some three or four thousand in 1980 (p. 15), and it left in its wake some old-timers deeply rooted to place. They simply stayed, clinging to fading businesses, to a Yiddish that was never a language of power, and to shrinking religious and social institutions.

The volume is structured in four parts; the first two are largely descriptive – “Getting to know the residents” and “Identities” – and the rest is more theoretical, with part 3, “Language and culture,” and part 4, “Philadelphia and beyond: The evolution of ethnic culture.” Having set the context, Peltz regularly casts details into a theoretical framework. He sets the physical and social environment, largely describing a conversation group that he initiated. There had been notable shrinkage in the community over the years, evidenced by many closed shops. Children and grandchildren are now far away, and mainly assimilated. Use of Yiddish has waned for most of these elderly Jews, but it remains a force both actually and symbolically. Peltz points out that Yiddish use varies considerably, but it barely exists at the level of organized activity. Even at its height, it had its chief place in the private domain (185), its use varying with the ages of parents at the time of immigration, presence of grandparents in the home, and birth order.

In scholarly terms, this book draws from many disciplines, sociolinguistics being central; but the volume might also be properly viewed as a travel log through time and ethnic space. In his careful pace, Peltz examines the memories of the community to find what underlies a transition from an integral culture to identification by ethnicity. He points out that ethnic identity is malleable, changeable over time and according to situation (193). Peltz applies a microscope to a neighborhood, finding a still living culture and a potential resource for those who explore the parameters of a heritage.

As the residents of South Philadelphia made the transition from immigrants to an ethnic minority, the Yiddish language changed its role from an active language that pragmatically and ideologically served immigrant needs, becoming instead a heritage language, a connecting link to roots and identity. Yiddish, in the form of his conversation group, is consciously reintroduced by Peltz, who loves the language and has devoted his career to it. As participant ethnographer, he becomes an agent of transformation, through which the elderly subjects are asked to re-

member, use, and continue to identify with Yiddish and the associated culture, *Yiddishkeit*. The book is as much about the meaning of community and place as about language. Peltz's hope is that somehow American Jews will again learn how to form tight communities; the Yiddish term for the concept is *tsuzamenlebn* 'life together'.

Of the four sections of the volume, I found the last to be the strongest; by this time the neighborhood and its residents have been presented in detail. The third section, however, promises more than it delivers. I had hoped for clearer information on proficiency, on domains of language use, and on facets of speech – all of which are present, but fragmentary. Reading this section was difficult at times, in that I found it difficult to sort out theory from narrative account. In the last segments, though, one does find a solid theoretical discussion. What the book does best is explain the paradox inherent in understanding the status of Yiddish in America: how it can be evocative and nostalgic, yet at the same time almost entirely abandoned. It is at the intersection of language and identity where Yiddish, the language of childhood, becomes again in old age a means of identifying, of taking on a symbolic status; but the resultant status is that of doubled marginality when it is compounded by old age.

For anyone who has spent much time in old Jewish neighborhoods, the settings Peltz offers are achingly familiar. Patience and reverence are requirements. The Community Center is a central locale for meetings of Peltz's Yiddish shmooze group, which he names *a glezl tey* 'a glass of tea', from an old custom of drinking hot tea with lemon from a glass, with a sugar cube anchored between the molars. We encounter an assortment of people as we learn about the needs, habits, and quirks of the elderly workers who once kept shops on Philadelphia's Seventh Street – especially the pillar of the community, Izzy in his luncheonette. We also meet some non-Jewish residents and a recent Russian immigrant whose husband suddenly dies, and whose only language of communication is Yiddish.

Peltz does not pretend to objectivity; his love for the people and the language are evident, and provide us with points of cultural intersection. He treats his conversation group with open affection and tenderness. For instance, a section named "A mutual admiration society," begins: "The better I got to know Izzy, the more I respected him and appreciated his interest in me." Peltz's desires are plain: the use of Yiddish, and Jewish observance for himself as a Jew who obeys the dietary laws. Through his prism we view the dynamics of cultural change and adaptation, not to a set point but to ever variable shifts and trends. Without such complexity of understanding, Jewish life is not comprehensible, and it cannot be reduced to simpler formulae.

The fate of Yiddish in America becomes evident when one considers what Peltz presents about the "Yiddish" inhabitants of South Philadelphia. They don't, in fact, speak much Yiddish at all, but they still identify with it, though very few seem to use it spontaneously. This is in sharp contrast to the use by Hasidic Jews in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where Yiddish is evident in everyday conversation, on shop

signs, and in newspaper stands. For secular Jews, Yiddish has been lost, and Peltz notes that the disjuncture between what one does and how one values the language is dramatic (196). Unless a group segregates itself in stable residential patterns and keeps ideological separation, the language disappears.

By the end, the vitality of Yiddish comes through, not so much in an expectation of younger generations picking it up, but in terms of the inclination of the elderly members of the conversation group to return to it in their twilight years. Most important, the elderly understand their roles as conservators and as instructors for their grandchildren. Yet one does not have a sense of a presence of these grandchildren, who live elsewhere geographically and culturally. So how can this ethnic heritage be transmitted? Institutions of Jewish education rarely pay any attention to Yiddish, and have set their ethnic markers in other terms. Attitudes are central in understanding the shifting role of secular Yiddish, in which seeming ambivalences and contradictions confound proponents of the language. For assimilationists, Yiddish evoked a sense of shame. Peltz notes that many felt, in rejecting Yiddish, a desire not to be different, not to be humiliated (188). An interesting point in the treatment of Yiddish throughout its history is its continuous marginalization (174). Even in Europe, when it boasted millions of speakers, it was never the main language of a place. Yet it continues to hold symbolic strength, serving as a unifying factor. Despite the fact that South Philadelphia is a low-prestige neighborhood, its residents have retained, through their ethnicity, a sense of local pride that is connected to their ethnic roots.

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LYLE CAMPBELL, *American Indian languages: The historical linguistics of Native America*. (Oxford studies in anthropological linguistics, 4.) Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xiv, 512. Hb \$75.00.

Reviewed by VICTOR GOLLA
Native American Studies, Humboldt State University
 Arcata, CA 95521
 gollav@axe.humboldt.edu

For more than a decade, Americanists have been working in the shadow of Greenberg's *Language in the Americas* (1987) and the hemisphere-wide classification of American Indian languages proposed there. Greenberg's work, based for the most part on naïve comparisons of lexical data with which he was largely unfamiliar, was met with considerable skepticism by scholars familiar with the prob-

lems of American linguistic classification. But Greenberg, a senior linguist who is widely recognized as the father of modern linguistic typology, aggressively defended his methods and results, and he made allies among geneticists and archeologists who found that his tripartite classification (Eskimo-Aleut, Na-Dene, and “Amerind”) dovetailed with some of their own ideas. Moreover, his book was published by a leading university press. Mainly for these reasons – certainly not for its critical acceptance – *Language in the Americas* has become a standard reference work. It is in most academic libraries in North America, and in many it is given a place of honor on the reference shelf – together with Merritt Ruhlen’s *Guide to the world’s languages, I: Classification* (published by the same press, 1987), which, at least for the Americas, does little more than uncritically recapitulate Greenberg.

This galls most linguists who are seriously involved with comparative and historical work. Numerous critiques of Greenberg’s methods and rebuttals of his conclusions have appeared in scholarly journals, but these have had little impact on the undergraduates and other neophytes who regularly consult *Language in the Americas* because it is easily accessible and apparently up-to-date. But now Campbell’s *American Indian languages* has deliberately set out to rectify this situation by giving libraries a second, authoritative-looking, and comprehensive treatment of the topic – only this time, the real goods.

Campbell is well qualified to do this. He is one of the most productive and respected scholars working on American Indian historical linguistics; he has several books to his credit, a string of important articles, and, with his co-editor Marianne Mithun, the honor of having his name attached to the proceedings of the most important conference on American Indian language classification of the last 50 years (Campbell & Mithun 1979). He is also a cautious and conservative methodologist, the very antithesis of Greenberg.

Campbell has several goals in this book. Most remarkably, his chap. 2, “The history of American Indian linguistics,” is a well-informed and wide-reaching history of linguistic classification in the Americas, from the Renaissance to the present day (his coverage of modern work is almost flawlessly comprehensive through 1994), with due attention to South and Central America. This chapter is a jewel of historical summary; and with some minor lapses, Campbell is even-handed in his critical assessments, even when dealing with compulsive “lumpers”.¹ No one who has a serious interest in the history of Americanist scholarship should let this chapter go unread.

Second, and clearly with the reference reader in mind, Campbell’s chaps. 3–6 provide an encyclopedic listing of all – literally all – the language families and unclassified isolates in the hemisphere, with bibliographical references and, quite frequently, summaries and assessments of the comparative work that has been carried out with respect to these units. (The bibliography, with close to 2,000 entries, is a magnificent accomplishment in its own right.) By “family” he basically means the universally accepted groupings that have been recognized for

North and Central America since the late 19th century (most notably in Powell's 1891 classification), and for South America since about 1940. Within the list for each family he further provides, where it is available, a full display of subgrouping (where two or more classifications are current, he shows his preference but notes the differences), usually down to the language (or even dialect) level. All these are cross-referenced in a fully comprehensive index. If for no other reason, all American Indian linguists should buy a copy of *American Indian languages* and have it (as I do) on their desks alongside the ever-useful *Ethnologue* of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Grimes 1992). It will now usually be Campbell we will reach for when we want to place an unfamiliar ethnonym from Oaxaca, or to know the classificatory status of some cluster of Amazonian dialects.

Campbell has two more goals, which clearly constitute the motivating purpose of the volume. On the one hand, he lays out, with characteristic bluntness and assurance, what in his view the historical linguist should do when confronted with upwards of a thousand languages and at least 150 Powell-level families and isolates. The guidelines are simple, if spartan (259): Rely on regular sound correspondences in basic vocabulary; look for "patterned grammatical evidence involving submerged features or shared aberrancy"; and always be open to other possible explanations for the similarities you find, most importantly borrowing, onomatopoeia, and chance. These are wise words, and they help put into perspective not only Greenberg's sorry proposals for the Americas, but also many of the excesses of long-range comparativists in both hemispheres. Good work is easy to define, and hard to do.

Then, with even greater bluntness and assurance, Campbell surveys all the major proposals for larger-than-family groupings (and a number of the minor ones as well) that have been made from Sapir and Kroeber onward, assigning them numerical scores on the basis of the data adduced in support of the hypothesis and the proposer's adherence to good methodology. A passing score ("more likely to be related than unrelated") is stated as a positive percentage, ranging from a low of 10% for Sahaptian-Klamath-Tsimshian to "near 100%" for Mayan. A failing score ("more likely that no relationship exists than that one does exist") is given as a negative percentage, again ranging from a barely-failing -10% for Uto-Aztecan-Keresan to a damning -90% for Tarascan-Quechua. Several proposals are scored "0%," indicating that Campbell finds the proposal "totally uncertain," e.g. Na-Dene including Haida, or Uto-Aztecan-Tanoan. To each probability score he attaches a "confidence" rating (again a percentage), roughly indicating the amount of material that exists on which a judgment can be based.

Reading these assessments is great fun (at least when one's own ox is not being gored); but their arbitrariness undermines the authority otherwise projected by the book's sober scholarship and accuracy. Campbell's tone of off-the-cuff approval or dismissal is exacerbated by some editorial gaffes. In the most startling of these, he rates Swanton's "Tunican" (Tunica-Chitimacha-Atakapa) as a wash (0% probability with 20% confidence), but on the same page (305) he excoriates

Swadesh's attempt to support part of the same linkage with 240 Chitimacha-Atakapa resemblant sets, dismissing it with –50% probability and 60% confidence (“greater problems . . . than most other proposals”).

One can forgive Campbell for his impatience with Swadesh, and his desire to wag a finger at all the other good linguists who have been led down the garden path by superficial lexical resemblances. Deep relationships surely exist among American languages, and between languages of America and those of the rest of humankind; but we need both good theoretical grounding and a respect for the intricacies of our data to discover and assess them. One of Campbell's most encouraging sections is his chap. 6, a survey of the languages of South America. Considering that, fewer than 50 years ago, whole language families were as yet undescribed in South America, the progress of recent decades in unraveling the historical complexities of that continent is inspiring. Terrence Kaufman's state-of-the-art classification (1990, 1994) identifies 118 genetic units – either isolates or universally accepted families – and then identifies the “clusters” of families most deserving of serious evaluation. Much of this work is already under way, at least some of it up to Campbell's exacting standards. North Americanists have fallen behind in devoting methodologically sophisticated attention to similar clusters in recent decades, but we are slowly returning to such promising hypotheses as Hokan and Penutian. It is only by carrying out such real work that Americanists can get past the sterility of seat-of-the-pants guesswork. Campbell's book can serve both as our manifesto and as our textbook.

NOTE

¹Campbell is least forgiving in South American work. Rivet, Loukotka, and Mason, the towering figures of South American classification in the first half of the 20th century, are seen – largely through the critical lens of Rowe 1954 – as, respectively, a bad, a worse, and the worst offender against proper comparative methodology.

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